# FREEMASONRY AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

"Having eyes, see ye not?
and having ears, hear ye not?
and do ye not remember?

(Mark, 8. 18)

BY a tacit and quite unwarranted convention members of our Order avoid mention in their Lodges of the Christian Master and confine their scriptural readings and references almost exclusively to the Old Testament, the motive being no doubt due to a desire to observe the injunction as to refraining from religious discussion and to prevent offence on the part of brethren who may not be of the Christian faith. This motive, however, is an entirely misguided one and is negated by the fact that the "greater light" upon which every member is obligated, and to which his earnest attention is recommended from the moment of his admission into the Order, is not only the Old Testament, but the volume of the Sacred Law in its entirety. Moreover, the New Testament is as essential to our Masonic instruction as the Old, and this is not merely because of its mortal teaching, but primarily in virtue of its constituting the record of the Mysteries in their supreme form and historic culmination. The Gospels themselves, like our Craft and Royal Arch system of degrees, are a record of preparation and illumination, leading up to the ordeal of death, followed by a raising from the dead and the attainment of Mastership, and they exhibit the process of initiation carried to the highest conceivable degree of attainment. The New Testament otherwise is full of passages in Masonic terminology and there is not a little irony in our failure to recognize its supreme importance and relevancy to our Lodge proceedings and in the fact that in doing so we may be likening ourselves to those builders of whom it is written that they rejected the chief Corner Stone. Furthermore, it is a matter of concern to serious students that the Transactions of Most Masonic Study Groups whilst devoting a great deal of attention to the subject of Freemasonry in relation to the Ancient Mysteries, entirely ignore the fact that neither the Ancient Mysteries nor Modern Freemasonry, their descendant, can be rightly viewed without reference to their relation to the Christian evangel, into which the pre-Christian schools became assumed. The line of succession and evolution from the Ancient Mysteries to the Christian schools is direct and organic. Allowing for differences of time, place and form of expression, both taught exactly the same truths and inculcated the necessity for regeneration. In such a matter there cannot be a diversity of

doctrine. The truth concerning it must be static and uniform at all periods
of the world's history. Hence we find St. Augustine affirming that there has
never existed but one religion in the world since the beginning of time (meaning by religion the science of rebinding the dislocated soul to its source), and that religion began to be called Christian in apostolic times.
And hence too it is that the idea of esotericism occupies a very important
place in Christian teaching and in the New Testament if these are properly
understood. In the New Testament the esoteric idea occupies the chief place in the four Gospels which are written for the pupils of esoteric schools, and it therefore follows that however intelligent and educated in
the ordinary sense a man may be, he will not understand the Gospels without special indications and without special esoteric knowledge. The New testament is a very strange book; it is written for those who possess a key. In each of the four Gospels there are many things consciously thought out and based on great knowledge and deep understanding of the human soul. A mere literary analysis of the style and content of the Gospels
shows the immense power of these narratives. They were written consciously for a definite purpose by men who knew more than they wrote. The Gospels tell us in a direct and exact way of the existence of esoteric
thought, and they are in themselves on e of the chief literary evidences of
the existence of this thought. In studying the New Testament it is necessary
to separate the legendary element, which is often borrowed from the life stories of other Messiahs and Prophets, from the narration of the actual life
of Jesus, and then to separate the legends and events described in it from
the teaching. The legendary side introduces into the life of Christ many entirely conventional figures and, as it were, stylizes him as a prophet, a
teacher or a Messiah. These legends adapted to Christ are drawn from the most varied sources. There are Indian, Buddhist and Old Testament legends, and there are features taken from Greek myths. The "massacre of the innocents" and the "flight into Egypt" are features taken from the life of
Moses. The "annunciation," that is, the appearance of the angel who announced the coming birth of Christ, is a feature from the life of Buddha.
In the history of Buddha it was a white elephant which descended from the heavens and announced to Queen Maya the coming birth of Prince
Gautama. There follows the feature of the old man Simeon waiting for the infant Jesus in the temple and saying that he might die since he had seen the newly born Saviour of the world - "Now lettest thou thy servant depart
in peace;" this is an episode taken entirely from the story of the life of
Buddha as the following will illustrate:-
"When Buddha was born, Asita, an aged hermit, came down from the Himalayas to Kapilavastu. Coming to the court he made sacrifices at the

feet of the child. Then Asita walked three times around the child and taking
him in his hands, recognized in him the 32 signs of Buddhahood, which he saw with his opened inner sight."

(Jatakamala - M.M. Higgins)

The strangest legend connected with Christ, which for a long time was a point of disagreement between different schools and finally became the basis of the dogmatic teachings of almost all Christian creeds, is the legend
of the birth of Jesus by the virgin Mary direct of God himself. This legend
arose later than the text of the Gospels. Christ called himself the son of
God or the son of man; he continually spoke of God as his father; he said that he and the father are one; that whoever obeys him, obeys his father also, and so forth. Yet Christ's own words do not create the legend, do not
create the myth; they can be understood allegorically and mystically in the
sense that Christ felt oneness with God, or felt God in himself. And above
all they can be understood in the sense that every man can become the son of God if he obeys the will and laws of God. In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ says:

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God"

(. 5,9 Rev. version)

And in another place:

"Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.
But I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you;

That ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the
unjust"

(Matt, 5, 43 - 45 rev. version)

The foregoing translation agrees with the Greek, Latin, French and Russian
translations. In the English Authorized Version, and also in the German, there stands "the children of God" and "the children of your Father," but this
is obviously a result of the adaptation of the Gospel text by theologians for
their own purposes. These texts show that originally the expression "Son of God" had an entirely different meaning from that given to it later. Indeed,
the myth of Christ being the son of God in the literal sense was created gradually during several centuries, and although many will certainly deny

the pagan origin of this idea, it is undoubtedly taken from Greek mythology.
In no other religious conception are there such definite relations between
gods and men as in the Greek myths. All the demi-gods, Titans and heroes of Greece were always direct sons of gods. In India gods themselves were incarnated in mortals, or descended on earth and assumed for a time the form of men or animals, but regarding great men as sons of gods is purely a Greek form of thinking (which later passed to Rome) of the relation between gods and their messengers on earth. Thus in dogmatic Christianity, Christ is the son of God in exactly the same sense as Hercules
was the son of Zeus or as AEsculapius was the son of Apollo. It is also interesting to note that Plato also was called a son of Apollo, while Alexander the Great in the temple of Jupiter Ammon in Egypt was declared to be a son of Jupiter and he accordingly disavowed his father Philip of Macedonia and was recognized buy the Egyptians as a son of God. Justin Martyr, in his "First Apology" addressed to the Emperor Hadrian, writes: -

"The son of God called Jesus, even if only a man by ordinary generation, yet on account of his wisdom is worthy to be called son of God ... and if we affirm that he was born of a virgin, accept this in common with what you
accept of Perseus."

(Mysticism and the Creed" - W.F. Cobb)

Quite apart, however, from the influence of Greek myths, the Christian Master had to become a god in accordance with the general idea of the Mysteries, for the death of the god and his resurrection were the fundamental idea of the Mysteries. St. Paul explains this very lucidly in the
following passages which are extracted from his Epistles:-

"For it became him, for whom all things, an d by whom were all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through many sufferings."

(Hebrews, 2, 10)

"For the law maketh men high priests which have informity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore."

(Hebrews, 7, 28)

"And we know that all things work together for god to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.
For whom did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."

(Romans 8, 28 - 29)

Here, it will be noted, Jesus is depicted as differing from the many Sons and Brothers only in being older than, and a pattern for, the others, and it

is therefore significant to find in the "Iliad (23, 355 (that, similarly, among
the Gods "Zeus was born first, and knew more.)

Students will find that in order to interpret the Gospels and the Gospel teaching, it is essential in the first place to understand clearly what the
terms "Kingdom of Heaven" and "Kingdom of God" mean, for these expressions are th key to the most important part of the Gospel instruction.
To many the words "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you" sound hollow and unintelligible, and it cannot be denied that not only do they fail to explain the principal idea, but they actually serve to render it obscure. The
key to this puzzle language, however, is provided by a close study of the New Testament, and the true explanation is admirably stated by the French occultist-writer, Abbe Constant (Eliphas Levi), who writes in his book "Transcendental Magic":-

"Magic which the men of old denominated the "Sanctum Regnum, the Holy Kingsom or Kingdom of God, "Regnum Dei' - exists only for kings and priests. The priesthood of Magic is not a vulgar priesthood and its royalty
enters not into competition with the princes of this world. The monarchs of
science are the princes of truth and their sovereignty is hidden from the multitude, like their prayers and sacrifices. The kings of science are the
men who know the truth and whom the truth has made free, according to the specific promise given by the most mighty of all initiators - John 8, 32."
("Transcendental Magic" translated by A.E.Waite)

In the light of the explanation given by Eliphas Levi it will be seen that the
Christian axiom that "the Kingdom of Heaven is within you" is identical with
our Masonic doctrine of the Centre, which is nowhere better elucidated than
by the poet Browning:

"Truth is within ourselves. It takes no rise
from outward things, whate'er you may believe.
There is An inmost centre in ourselves
Where truth abides in fullness; and to know
Rather consists in finding out a way
Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape
Then by effecting entrance for a light
Supposed to be without."

The New Testament, therefore, is an introduction to the hidden knowledge or the secret wisdom. One line of thought that can be clearly traced by the
student is that which sets forth the principles of the Kingdom of Heaven in
relation to the esoteric circle, and this is the line which emphasises the

difficulty and exclusiveness of apprehending truth. Another line shows what must do in order to approach truth, and what they must not do, that is, what can help them and what can hinder them. This latter line is important from the point of view of Masonic doctrine because it details the methods and rules of study and work on oneself. To the first line belongs the saying that the approach to truth requires exceptional efforts and exceptional conditions, only a few can approach truth. No phrase is more often repeated in the New Testament than the saying that "only those who have ears can hear." The idea that it is necessary to know how to hear and see, and to be able to hear and see, and that not everyone can hear and see, is brought out in the following passage extracted from the Gospel according to St. Matthew:-

"Therefore I speak to them in parables; because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Essais, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand: and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive.

For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I shall heal them.

But blessed are your eyes, for they see; an your eyes, for they hear.

For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

(Matt. 13, 13 - 17)

On another occasion the Master is represented as declaring:-

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

(Matt. 5, 3)

Now, "poor in spirit" is a very enigmatic expression and we need evince no surprise when we learn that it is one that has been consistently wrongly interpreted. Nevertheless, as students who already have some insight of the hidden meaning of similar phrases adapted for the purpose of teaching Masonic doctrine, we should be able to discern that to be "poor in spirit" does not mean to be weak in spirit, while it certainly does not imply poverty

in the material sense.In their true meaning these words contain the Buddhist idea of non-attachment to things, and in this sense a man who by the strength of his spirit makes himself non-attached to things, as though he is divested of them, that is, when things have for him as little meaning for him as if he had not them and not known about them, will be "poor in spirit." Such a man is otherwise correctly described in our Masonic terminology as being "poor and penniless", for he is deemed to have left all "monies and metallic substances" behind him, realising that thew gross things of this world are superfluous in the world that lies within; whilst it is also to be observed that if any dross of thought or imperfection of character remain him, he will find for himself the impossibility of attaining the consciousness of the "kingdom of heaven," his highest self, and he will learn that he must renounce them and begin again. There is a great significance in the fact that a certain dramatic episode is enacted by the candidate in the N.E. corner of our Lodges. In this position he is intended to see that on the one side of him is the path that leads to the perpetual light of the East, into which he is encouraged to proceed, and that on the other is the path of spiritual obscurity into which it is possible for him to remain or relapse. On the one hand there is the path of selfishness, material desires and sensual indulgence, of intellectual blindness and moral stagnation; and on the other is the path of moral and spiritual progress, in pursuing which may decorate and adorn the Lodge within him with the ornaments and jewels of grace and with invaluable furniture of true knowledge, which he may dedicate, in all his actions, to the service of God and of his fellow men.

The New Testament further contains a very significant warning issued by the Master to those who would relinquish the ideals of the outer world, in which it better not to enter upon the path of initiation, better not to begin the work of inner purification, then to begin and abandon it:-

"When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.

And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first."

(Luke 11, 24 - 26)

Freemasonry likewise instructs us that the depths of human nature and self-knowledge, the hidden mysteries of the soul of man, are not probed into with impunity except by the "properly prepared." The man who does so has, as it were , a cable-tow around his neck; because when once stirred by a genuine desire for the higher knowledge that real initiation is intended to confer, he can never turn back on what he learns thereof without committing moral suicide; he can never be again the same man he was before he gained a glimpse of the hidden mysteries of life. And as the Angel stood with the flaming sword at the entrance of Eden to guard the way to the Tree of Life, so will the man whose initiation is not a conventional one find himself threatened at the door of the higher knowledge by opposing invisible forces if he rashly rushed forward in a state of moral unfitness into the deep secrets of the centre. This is the reason why every genuine system of Initiation, whether of the past or present, is divided into three clear-cut stages with "peculiar secrets restricted to each;" since before anyone can pass from his natural "state of darkness" to the light supernal and discover the Blazing Star or Glory at his own centre, there are three distinct tasks to be achieved. These three stages may be briefly formulated as follows:-

FIRST STAGE. The turning away from the attractions of the outer world, involving detachment from the allurements of all that is signified by the phrase "monies and metallic substances," and the purification and subdual of the bodily and sensual tendencies.

SECOND STAGE. Analysis, discipline and obtaining control of one's inner world, - of the mind, of one's thoughts, one's intellectual and psychic faculties.

THIRD STAGE. The "latest and greatest trial;" the breaking and surrender of the personal will, the dying sown of all sense of personality and self-hood, so the petty personal will may become merged in the divine Universal Will and the illusion of separate independent existence give way to conscious realisation of unity with the one Life that permeates the Universe.

Members of this Study Circle will be aware that it is these three stages, these three labours or processes, that are epitomised dramatically in our three Craft Degrees, but it is not generally recognized that originally membership of the Christian Church also involved a sequence of three initiatory rites identical in intention. The names given to those who had qualified in the Christian Rites were respectively Catechumens, Leiturgoi, and Priests or Presbyters; which in turn are identifiable with our Entered Apprentice, Fellow-crafts and Master Masons. Their first degree was that of rebirth and purification of the heart; their second related to the illumination

of the intelligence; and their third to a total death unto sin and a new birth
unto righteousness, in which the candidate died with Christ on the cross, as with us he is made to imitate the death of Hiram, And was raided to that
higher order of life which is Mastership. To clear vision, therefore, Christian
and Masonic doctrine are identical in intention although different in method.
The one says "Via Crucis;" the other "Via Lucis;" yet the two ways are but
one, for the Grand Master and Exemplar of Freemasonry, Hiram Abiff, is,
for our Craft, the type not only of Christ, but also of the whole noble army
of known and unknown martyr who, in all ages and in every race, have
"suffered unto death" for the truth. Moreover, it is these prototypes who are
commemorated collectively in the Christian Church as the "Holy Innocents,"
and we may observe a striking parallel between the Craft and the Church
when we compare the direction given to every Freemason to emulAte to
the death and fortitude And fidelity of H.A., with the prayer for "The
Innocents' Day," "that by the innocency of our lifes, and constancy of our
faith even unto death."

Many have doubted the existence of the Mysteries of the "Kingdom of
Heaven" which the Christian Master delivered to His disciples in secret and
to which so many of the leading Christians in the early Church testified. We
have, however, only to turn to the constructive theology of the Christian
school at Alexandria for confirmation of the existence of a hidden doctrine.
Alexandria has always been one of the most remarkable of the Christian
churches; here Egypt, Greece, Israel, Rome and the Orient met, not only
in commerce, but also in intellectual And spiritual intercourse. It was here
that Philo had given his spiritual interpretation of the Jewish scriptures and
taught his Logos-doctrine which afterwards was to prove such a useful
receptacle for the doctrine about Christ. It was here that the Therapeuts
had their communities, which might have been taken for early Christian
monastic settlements, so strong was their resemblance to the new religion
in doctrine and in practice. Here again, in Alexandria, the famous library
had been a centre of learning, the like of which could not be found
anywhere in the civilised world of those days, the Museum had become the
leading Greek university and the main centre of philosophical learning in
the Roman Empire. Here from the earliest days the instruction of members
in the Christian doctrine was organised better than anywhere else; here for
the first time we find a critical study and arrangement of the Christian
scriptures. The first head of the catechetical school of Alexandria was one
Pantaenus, a Sicilian by birth, who after having travelled through India and
become acquainted with the doctrines of Indian religious philosophy

returned to Alexandria and became the principle exponent of Christianity in
that Church. His greatest pupil, greater indeed than his master, was
Clement of Alexandria, an Athenian by birth, who had been converted to
Christianity and thus combined in himself the nobility of Greek culture with
the depth of Christian faith. Clement was an initiate in the so-called
"Mysteries of Jesus" and speaks of them repeatedly in his writings. Thus he
says:

"The Lord allowed us to communicate of those divine mysteries, and of that
holy life, to those who were able to receive them. He certainly did not
disclose to the many what did not belong to the many; who were capable
of receiving and being moulded according to them." (Stromateis, Book 1
, chapter 28)

The successor to Clement as head of this catechetical school was a young
pupil called Origen. Although only seventeen years old at the time of his
appointment, such was already his reputation for purity of life and depth of
learning that  he was considered worthy to be the head of this most famous
school of Christian instruction. Unlike Clement, Origen was born of
Christian parents; at the time of his birth in the year 185, his father,
Leonides, resided in Alexandria, although the name "Origen," meaning
"offspring of Horus," makes it unlikely that at some time his family resided
in Egypt. The years between his appointment as head of the catechetical
school and his temporary absence from Alexandria were years of great
activity in all directions. So many came to hear his lectures that he was
forced to hand over the elementary instruction to Heraclas, one of his
pupils, who in later years was to become his successor and Bishop of
Alexandria. Even so, his teaching was but a part of his work; his studies
were deep and varied. Thus he attended the lectures of Ammonius Saccas,
the father of Neo-Platonism, and made a study of Plato, Numenius, the
Stoices and the Pythagoreans, so that he might understand non-Christian
thought and be better able to expound the Christian teachings to the
followers of these different philosophies. Then again he learnt Hebrew, so
as to be able to study the Old Testament in the original, the result of which
studies appeared in the "Hexapla," his "magnum opus," in which he
compared the Hebrew text with the Greek version and tried to bring out a
reliable text of the "Septuagint," a labour which took over twenty years to
complete. Origen, like Clement, was an initiate if the inner school called
"the Mysteries of Jesus," and this is the important fact which emerges from
his controversy with the philosopher Celsus, as the following extract from
"Contra Celsum" will show:-

"...to speak of the christian doctrine as a secret system, is altogether
absurd. But that there should be certain doctrines, not made known to the
multitude,which are revealed after the exoteric ones have been taught, is

not a peculiarity of Christianity alone, but also of philosophic systems, in
which certain truths are exoteric and others esoteric. Some of the hearers
of Pythagoras were content with his "ipse dixit:" while others were not
deemed fit to be communicated to profane and insufficiently prepared ears.
Moreover, all the mysteries that are celebrated throughout Greece and
barbarous countries, although held in secret, have no discredit thrown
upon them, so that it is vain that he endeavours to culumniate the secret
doctrines of Christianity, seeing that he does not correctly understand its
nature."

The qualifications of a candidate for the "Mysteries of Jesus" were precisely
those provided for Masonic candidates today. The one dominant wish of
his heart in asking for admission had to be a yearning desire to pass from
natural blindness to the innermost Light, and to have his old imperfect
nature revolutionised and transformed. Without that desire as the deepest
urge of his heart no real Initiation is possible, nor is any candidate properly
prepared to ask for it. No one can expect to come to the revelation of the
supernatural Light or to be raised to the sublime degree of a Master-soul,
who is content with his present life as it is, who regards himself as not in
darkness but as already enlightened, or supposes his present mortal
existence to constitute real life. Of the "blind" and "those who can see" the
Christian Master speaks in St. John's Gospel:-

"And Jesus said, For judgement I am come into this world, that they which
see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And
some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said
unto him, Are we blind also?
Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye
say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth".

In a like sense the candidate had to be a free man; free in a moral rather
than in a civil sense; voluntarily offering himself for the work and free from
all attachments hindering its achievement; and so becoming free to the
godly fellowship of all other initiates the world over and free from any less
worthy intercourse. The rule of life to which all candidates for Initiation must
conform is alluded to in the Gospel according to St. Matthew, and in this
instance the Master emphasises the distinction between esoteric values and
earthly values:-

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth
corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust
doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole
body shall be full of light.
But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore
the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and ;love the other;
or else he will hold to the one and despise the other.
Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
(Matt. 6, 19 - 24)

Thus only by perceiving the unreality and impermanency of the present world and its interests can one really begin to detach himself it and truly
divest himself, in thought and desire, of its "money and metallic substances." So long as one carries those with him or remains in any sense
"in worldly possessions," he darkens his own light and automatically defers
his own initiation. The term "worldly possessions" does not mean merely one's cash and temporal belongings; it includes all that clogs and clings to is from immersion in the outer world; our intellectual possessions, our
stores of notions, beliefs and preconceptions about truth, and the mental habits and self will we have acquired, even with the best of motives, in our
"state of darkness."

The rule of the Mysteries was that twelve years of preparation should elapse before the last great spiritual experience was permitted that brought
the candidate to the Light at his centre and qualified him for Mastership,
although less time sufficed in appropriate cases. As the result of his purifications and labours the candidate had now become an illuminate and he was mystically said to be twelve years old. In other words, from a rough
ashlar he had become a polished cube, a stone fit for building into the "holy city: which we are told lieth foursquare and has twelve gates that are
always open. All the parts of his organism were now equalised and balanced, and therefore all his "gates" (channels of intercourse with the divine world), no longer shut and clogged by the darkness of his former impurities, lay open for the passage through them of the true Light. This condition, in Craft Freemasonry, is called the "hour of high twelve;" and he
who has attained it will be, like Hiram Abiff, in constant communion with,
and adoration of, the Most High. Similarly, when the candidate had advanced still further to the sublime degree and powers of Mastership he was said to be thirty years old. You will find these mystical ages referred to
in the New Testament, where we are told of the Great Exemplar being

twelve years old and so illuminated that His wisdom confounded the academic but enlightened teachers of the Temple:-

"And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast."
(Luke 2, 42 and onwards)

and again that He "began to be about thirty years old," at which period began his work as a Master, which continued for another three years and manifested such works and teaching as are possible only to a Master:-

"And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli."
(Luke 3, 25)

Thirty-three years was, in the Mysteries, the mystical duration of life of every initiate who attained Mastership.That period had no relation to bodily age; it is based on considerations which refer to the completion of human evolution, when it can be said of the soul' stravail "It is finished," "He hath wrought the purpose through of That which made him man." It is for this reason that the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry extends to thirty-three Degrees, in perpetuation of the original secret tradition. The path of true initiation into fullness of life is called in the New Testament the narrow way. of which it is also said that few there be that find it:-

"Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."
(Matt. 7, 13 - 14)

In Freemasonry the "way of initiation" is symbolised by the narrow path which is deemed to lie between the two Pillars, for Boaz and Jachin stand impliedly at the entrance of every Masonic Temple and between them we pass each time we enter the Lodge. These pillars form, and have always formed, a prominent feature in the temples of all great systems of religion and initiation. They have been incorporated into Christian architecture, and if you recall the construction of Westminster Abbey or York Minister, you will recognise the pillars in the two towers flanking the main entrance to these cathedrals at the west end of the structure. In one of the Apocryphal scriptures (2 Esdras, 7, 7 - 8), the path to true wisdom and life is spoken of as an entrance between fire on the right hand and a deep water on the left, and so narrow and painful that only one man may go through it at once. This is a further allusion to the narrow and painful path of initiation of which our entrance into the Lodge between the pillars is a symbol, and

it is in order to demonstrate the "perfect points of entrance" leading to this
way that emphasis is laid in our Masonic teaching upon the necessity of complete moral rectitude, of utter exactness of thought, word and action, as these are exemplified by a rigid observance of the symbolic principles of the square, level and plumb-rule. For he who desires to rise to the heights of his own being must first crush and crucify his own lower nature
and inclinations; he must perforce tread what in the New Testament is described as the way of the Cross, and that Cross is indicated in our Craft
by the conjunction of those three working tools, which when united form a cross. And eventually the Aspirant, after the preliminary disciplines, has to
learn the great truth embodied in our Third Degree; that he would be raised
to perfection, may do so only by utter self-abnegation, by a dying to all that
to the eyes and the reason of the uninitiated outer world is precious and desirable. Beneath the allegory of the death of the Master Builder is expressed the universal truth that mystical death must precede mystical rebirth, for our third degree is an exposition in dramatic ceremonial of the
New Testament text:-

"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life
for my sake shall find it."
(Matt. 16, 25)

The principles of initiation are explained in St. John's Gospel where we find
the idea of the "new birth" clearly expressed by the Master:-

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.
Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and
of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit
is spirit, Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

(St. John 3, 3 - 7)

Then follows the idea of resurrection, of being "raised from the dead":-

"For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.
For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgement unto the Son:
ThAt all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.
Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him

that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation;
but is passed from death unto life.
Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.
For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have
life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgement also, because he is the Son of man.
Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves
shall hear his voice."
(St. John 5, 21 - 28)

These passages are usually interpreted quite wrongly by exponents of the existing popular teaching, although the inner meaning should be apparent to instructed members of our Masonic Order. The phrase "all that in the graves" certainly does not refer to dead people who are buried in the earth,
but, on the contrary, to those who are regarded as living in the ordinary sense, and we meet with the same idea several times in the Gospels where men are compared to sepulchres or graves. Perhaps the best expression of the idea is that contained in the wonderful Easter hymn of the Orthodox
Church:-

"Christ is risen from the dead.
He has conquered death with death,
And given life to those who were in tombs."

To this refer also the words in St. John's Gospel which connect the teachings of the Gospels with the teaching of the Mysteries:-

"Verily, verily, I say unto you,
Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if
it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

The "grain" played a very important part in the ancient Mysteries, for the
sowing and "burial" of the grain in the earth, its death and "resurrection" in
the form of a green sprout, symbolised the whole idea of the Mysteries. There are many naive pseudo-scientific attempts to explain the Mysteries as an "agricultural myth," or, in other words, as the survival of the rites of
a primitive agricultural people, whereas, all the available evidence goes to
prove that far from being conceived by a primitive people, they were in fact
transmitted from long-vanished prehistoric civilisations. The grain allegorically represented "man", and in the case of the Eleusinian Mysteries
every candidate for initiation carried in a particular procession a grain of
wheat in a tiny earthenware bowl. The secret that was revealed to a man

at the initiation was contained in the idea that man could die simply as a grain, or could rise again into some other life. In St. Mark's Gospel there is an interesting parable which explains the laws under which the influence of the inner circle is exerted an outer humanity:-

"And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground;
And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.
For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.
But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come."
(Mark 4, 26 - 29)

The continuation of this idea of the "harvest" is found in St. Luke's Gospel:-

"Therefore he said unto them, The harvest is truly great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.
Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.
Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.
And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house."
(Luke 10, 2 - 5)

In St. John's Gospel the same idea is developed in a still more interesting way:-

"And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal:
that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.
And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.
I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours."
(John 4, 36 - 38)

This passage reminds us that in the Instruction Lectures of our Second Degree, Initiates of the secret science in the past ("our ancient Brethren") are said to have paid wages. The wages, we are told, were paid in the porchway of the Temple; and much or little, they were accepted without demur, because of the recipients' complete confidence in their employers and the recognition that only so much would be received as their work was actually worth. The Masonic tradition asserts that the wages were not paid in cash, but in corn, wine, and oil. The spiritual Craftsman not only earns his own wages proportionately to his work; his own labours automatically supply them. God, as his employer, has already lodged them within him in

advance; he has only to appropriate them as he becomes justly entitled to them by his own labours, in the same manner that the sons of Jacob found their money restored to them in their corn-sacks. In their higher symbolism
Corn (or Bread) and Wine relate to those of the Altar, and were Eucharistic
elements in the Mysteries long before the Christian Master in a certain "upper room" (or higher level of application) took over and gave a new endowment to the wheat of Ceres and the wine of Bacchus-Dionysos; while Oil, the crushed out and refined product of the olive, refers to that Wisdom
which is the ultimate essence of experience and knowledge, and which has been associated, in the different Mystery teachings, with Minerva, with Solomon, and with the Mount of Olives. The Freemason is himself likened to an "ear of corn," nourished by a "fall" of the Water of Life. In virtue of the
animal element in his nature he is himself "the ox that treadeth out the corn," separating his own golden grain from the stalk that bore it. He is himself the "threshing flour of Aruanah," winnowing his own chaff from his
own wheat. He threads his own wine-press alone; in singleness of effort and in the solitude of his own thought distilling his own vintage, until the
cup of his mind runs over with the wine of a new order of intelligence. He
is his own oil-press, and out of his experience and self-realisation extracts
wisdom - that oil which anoints him with a joy and an ability above his fellows, and that runs down to the "skirts of his clothing," manifesting itself
in his personality in all his activities. Corn, wine, and oil, are therefore laid
upon the altar at the consecration of every Masonic Lodge; they are the emblems of a Craftsman's wages.

In the New Testament, as in Freemasonry and every other ancient expression of mystical teaching, there is frequent allusion to mountains and
hills, and to the work being conducted upon them. It must be understood that in no case is the allusion to any physical mountain or geographical position, but to the spiritual elevation of the work undertaken by some particular group or school of Initiates. Spiritual science has nothing to do
with material things or places, save in so far as the latter serve as a foundation-stone or point of departure for achieving spiritual results. From
immemorial time the Vedists of India have spoken of their sacred Mount Meru, which , later in history, becomes reproduced among the Hebrews as Mount Moriah. The Greeks had their Mounts Olympus and Parnassus, on the summits of which dwelt the Gods. The Israelites obtained their law from
Divine hands on Mount Sinai; the Christians theirs from the Mount of Olives.
We also learn from the Gospels of the "exceeding high mountain" of Temptation and the Mount of Transfiguration. None of these mountains are situate in this world, in time or place. The names are mystical names associated with super-physical heights to which man in his spiritual consciousness may ascend. It is true that mountains bearing these names,

or some of them, do appear on the map, but their names and the ideas they connote existed long before they were given a local association for symbolic purposes. There is scarcely a country without its sacred mountain
that reminds its inhabitants of the heavenly heights and to which sacred traditions are not attached. When Initiates of the past are said to have performed their work upon this or that hill or mountain, the meaning is that
they were engaged in work of a high spiritual order, while those who were seeking to become Initiates and aspiring to the work were instructed that they must first conform themselves to what is known as the Law of the Mount. Hence, in the New Testament the instruction given by the Christian Master to his initiate-disciples is called the "Sermon in the Mount," and is
popularly supposed to have been delivered upon a hill-side. The popular world is truly quite unable to act up to the terms of the Law of the Mount,
but it is overlooked that such a high doctrine was not meant for the popular
world nor addressed to it. It was delivered to, and intended for, those few
who have outgrown and renounced the ideals of the outer world And who seek initiation into a new and higher order of life which contradicts the wisdom of that world at every point. The Christian Master did not teach all
men not to resist evil, to turn the left cheek when they are smitten on the
right, and to give their cloaks to those who want to take away their coats.
These precepts in no way constitute general moral rules, and they are not a code of Christian virtues. They are rules for disciples, and not general
rules of conduct. The true meaning of these rules can be explained only in
an occult school, and the key to this meaning is in the words:-

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."
(Matt. 5, 48)

The way of the natural uninitiated man is that of self-assertion and material
acquisitiveness; he is bent upon securing all he can get from this world, and wisdom, knowledge, and power, are what seem to be such in his own eyes. He is not wrong or blameworthy; he is simply fulfilling the law of his
present nature, which is the only law he as yet knows. The initiated man, however, is one to whom a higher nature and law have become revealed, and it is to him that the Christian Master addresses himself in the Gospel
according to St. Matthew:-

"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat,
or what ye shall drink; nor yet for the body, what ye shall put on. Is not the
life more than meat, and the body than raiment?
Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor

gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?
Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?
And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how
they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin.
And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed
like one of these.
Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to
morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?
Therefor take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink, or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?
(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father
knoweth that ye have need of all these things.
But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these
things shall be added unto you.
Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought
for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."
(Matt. 6, 25 - 34).

Each of these passages forms the content of a special, complex and practical teaching. These practical teachings, taken together, constitute an
occult or esoteric system of self-training and self-education based on principles unknown outside occult schools. Nothing can be more useless and more naive than an endeavour to understand their content without adequate instruction. It is not, therefore, for his personal aggrandizement
or salvation that a man seeks, or should seek, initiation into the higher order of life, or should aspire for the wisdom and power that therewith come. To do so from this motive would be merely to imitate the ways of the outer world, apart from the fact that it would neutralise the whole purpose of intitation. When wisdom and power do come to the initiated man, they are not for his own use but for the help of the race; he is a Master among men, because he is a universal servant; he is the most effective spokesman in the world, because of his capacity to be silent. Masonic secrecy and silence are inculcated for this very reason; for all spiritual power is generated in silence. In mystical systems the idea of keeping secrets is connected with the idea of conserving energy, and the ability to keep silence is the first degree of the control of oneself. One of the
first principles of esoteric work, which all aspirants must learn, is that
embodied in the New Testament text:-

"Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." The study of the theoretical and practical meaning of this principle constitutes one of the
most important parts of school work in all esoteric schools without exception. This element of secrecy was very strong in the Christian communities of the first centuries. And the requirement of secrecy was not

based on the fear of persecution, as is now generally thought, but on the still existing traditions of esoteric schools, with which the Christian communities were undoubtedly linked. Nothing can be stronger than the language of the Fathers of the Church down to the fifth century on the care
with which the creed was to be kept a secret. It was to be preserved in memory only. The name Symbolum was used for it, of which the most probable explanation is that it meant a password whereby Christians recognised each other. St. Augustine says: "You must not write down anything about the creed because God said, " I will put my law in their hearts and in their minds I will write it." Therefore the Creed is learned by
hearing and is not written on tablets or on any actual material substance,
but in the heart." Freemasons will not need to be reminded of the parallel
instruction in regard to the written communication of Masonic secrets.

And now let us close this Paper, as every Masonic Lodge is closed, in peace and concord with all our Brethren, and with the ancient prayer that the Order may be preserved of God, and its members be cemented with every virtue. If, in what has here been spoken of, Freemasonry has been interpreted exclusively in the light of the teaching contained in the New Testament, it must not be presumed that we seek to identify the Masonic prototype only with the Christian Master. Our Science in its universality limits our conception of the Master to no one exemplar. Take, it says, the
nearest and most familiar to you, the one under whose aegis you were racially bornand who therefore may serve you best; for each is bale to bring
you to the centre, although each may have his separate method. To the Jewish Brother it says, take the Father of the faithful, and realise what being
gathered to his bosom means. To the Christian Brother,  it points to Him upon whose breast lay the beloved disciple, and urges him to reflect upon what that implies. To the Hindu Brother it points to Krishna, who came and
rode in the same chariot with Arjuna, and bids him look to a similar intimate
union. To the Buddhist it points to the Maitreya of universal compassion, and to the Moslem it points to his Prophet, and the significance of being clothed with the latter's mantle. Life in the realm of Spirit is a unity, not a
diversity, and for Masonic seekers the wide world over, of whatever nation
or creed, there is but one Grand Master and Hierophant, but He can manifest and deputise throughdivers channels. As in the Craft Lodge there is but one Master, yet many of equal rank capable of representing him and doing his work, so has the world's Grand Master in the heights His associates and deputies here in its dark depths. Let the earnest craftsman,
then, seek a Master where and how he will; he cannot fail to find him. Failure to find will be due to his having failed, rightly, and from his heart, to
seek.

"SO MOTE IT BE"

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